



First-grade teacher Tricia Huckins received an award for elementary science teaching at the Governor's Industry Award for Notable Teaching in Science (GIANTS) ceremony in Boise. Idaho National Laboratory co-sponsors the annual event.

Science teachers recognized as GIANTS

by [Marilyn Whitney](#), INL Communications & Public Affairs

"My teacher rocks at science." That's how a first-grader at Vision Charter School in Caldwell describes teacher Tricia Huckins, one of this year's recipients of the Governor's Industry Award for Notable Teaching in Science (GIANTS).



INL education liaison Cheryl Burgess received a letter of commendation from Gov. Otter for her efforts to enhance education programs in Idaho.

Huckins, along with Daniel Richards from New Meadows and Salvatore Lorenzen from Post Falls, received the GIANTS honor from Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna at a recent ceremony and luncheon at the Discovery Center of Idaho in Boise.

Each year students, parents and principals nominate teachers who integrate real-life science and technology applications into their classrooms and make science relevant, challenging, exciting and fun for their students. Idaho National Laboratory is one of several industry sponsors.

A selection committee made of representatives from industry and education evaluate the nominations and identify awardees in three categories — elementary, middle and high school — as well as honorable-mention honorees in each category. Recipients receive a \$2,000 cash award and a \$200 gift certificate for classroom supplies from the sponsor companies, and the student councils or schools that submit the winning nominees receive a cash award of \$500. Honorable-mention honorees receive a \$500 cash award, and their schools receive \$100.

Industry sponsors of the GIANTS program include INL, Idaho Power Company, URS Washington Division, Micron Foundation, Hewlett-Packard, Premier Technology and LCF Enterprises. The effort is also supported by the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education, the State Commercial Innovation Division and the Discovery Center of Idaho.

Tricia Huckins was selected at the elementary level for engaging students in hands-on learning through the school garden, science fair and science experiments. Using an integrated approach, she ties science into math, English, history, art and practical life applications. School Administrator Wendy Oldenkamp says of Huckins, "She is planting the seeds of scientific discovery and inspiring even the youngest children to excel in science." According to parent and volunteer Kathy Rigby, "The kids in her class get excited about science because Mrs. Huckins gets excited about science."

The middle school GIANTS recipient, Dan Richards of Meadows Valley Schools in New Meadows, teaches a variety of science courses in grades 7-12. Students especially look forward to the annual week-long science trip they take with Mr. Richards to different ecological and geographical sites. While there, they create podcasts, notebooks and journals of their experiences. In their nomination letter, students recounted their experience installing solar panels at the school as part of Mr. Richards' classes. The panels produce electricity while students monitor production. According to one student, "Mr. Richards' students come away from his influence with an enlarged sense of the Earth's opportunities and its limitations and with an understanding of their own footprints on this planet."

Salvatore Lorenzen, a veteran teacher in Post Falls, received this year's award at the high school level. Mr. Lorenzen is the professional technical department chair at Post Falls High and is the leader and advisor of the school's FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Team as well as a variety of other student clubs. Student Council President Angie Whalen says, "Mr. Lorenzen has worked very hard to show students how science and the real world go hand in hand." Principal Dena Naccarato says, "Sal has gone above and beyond to expand our professional technical department and make in-roads with the business community." Lorna Finman, President of LCF Enterprises, has partnered with Lorenzen on robotics programs. She says, "Mr. Lorenzen works tirelessly to support his students with technology opportunities through reaching out to the community. He is the type of teacher businesses want training future



Luna (l) and Otter (r) present a 2009

employees."

***GIANTS award to Post Falls High
School teacher Salvatore Lorenzen.***

Honorable mention honors this year went to Susan Kirking of Jenifer Jr. High in Lewiston, DaNel Huggins of Kuna High School in Kuna, and joint honors went to Orchard Elementary's TESLA science team in Lewiston and Carberry Intermediate School's NASA team in Emmett.

The awards luncheon included a special presentation to INL education liaison Cheryl Burgess. Burgess received a letter of commendation from Gov. Otter who recognized her "leadership, initiative and passion for education" over her 23-year career with INL.

Links:

[Governor's Press Release](#)

[Letter of Commendation to Cheryl Burgess, INL Education Liaison](#)

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